(c) whether these have been able to provide better living and working conditions upholding the dignity of labour?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) The Ninth Plan had accorded priority to agriculture and rural development with a view to generating adequate productive employment and eradication of poverty. The plan had focused on sectors, sub-sectors and technologies which are labour intensive, in regions characterised by higher rates of unemployment and underemployment.

(b) and (c) There was substantial reduction in the persons below the poverty line. As per estimates of the Planning Commission the number of persons below the poverty line which was of the order of 36% in 1993-94 has come down to 26% in 1999-2000.

Unemployment Problem

1317. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any Action Plan/Policy for solving the problem of unemployment for the educated and uneducated youths in Meghalaya;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) Employment generation in the country is attempted through the growth process of the Economy. Ninth Plan had accorded priority to agriculture and rural development with a view to generating adequate productive employment and eradication of poverty. The plan had focused on sectors, sub-sectors and technologies which are labour intensive, in regions characterised by higher rates of unemployment and underemployment. The overall plan is for generation of employment in all the States including the State of Meghalaya.

A scheme for setting up of new ITIs and strengthening of the existing ITIs in the North-Eastern States and Sikkim has been taken up for improving

the skill level of the unemployed so as to improve their employability. Meghalaya is included in the scheme.

Second Labour Commission

1318. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Union Cabinet has decided to extend the terms of the Second Labour Commission till February 15, 2001 which was entrusted with the task of formulating labour reforms;

(b) whether several Sub-Committees have been set up to work out legislation to safeguard the interests of the workers, in unorganized sector, which forms over 70 per cent of the vast workforce in the country; and

(c) if so, by when these reforms would be approved finally and brought in force?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) The Government has extended the term of the Second National Commission on Labour upto 15.02.2002.

(b) and (c) Six Study Groups have been set up by the Second National Commission on Labour. These are on Review of Laws, Umbrella Legislation for Workers in the Unorganised Sector, Globalisation and its Impact, Social Security, Women and Child Labour and Skill Development, Training and Workers Education. Out of these, the Study Groups on Umbrella Legislation for Workers in the Unorganised Sector, Social Security, Skill Development, Training and Workers Education and Women and Child Labour have gone into the issues concerning the interests of the unorganised sector workers. The report of the Commission is expected by 15.02.2002.

Significance of contract labour in public sector undertakings

1319. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court's judgement on allowing contract labour in Public Sector Undertakings is of great significance as they now can increase or decrease their labour force to meet the requirements of production and thus increase profitability; and